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SUBJECT: SLOVENIA EAGER TO HEAR FROM DAS DICARLO ON BALKAN ISSUES

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Classified By: CDA MCOLEMAN E.O. 12958, reason 1.4(b, d)

Summary

¶11. (C) In a series of November 5 meetings with EUR DAS Rosemary DiCarlo, senior MFA officials urged close cooperation and sought U.S. views as to the way forward on Balkan issues, which Slovenia sees as a priority issue for its EU Presidency. The Slovenes stressed the importance of speeding up the SAA process for Serbia before finalizing Kosovo's status. They were likewise eager for progress on EU enlargement for the other Balkan countries as well as pushing for all three aspirant countries to receive invitations at next spring's NATO Summit. The Slovene concern about Russian obstruction to progress in the Balkans figured throughout the day.

FM Rupel disturbed by situation in the Balkans

¶12. (C) FM Rupel told DAS DiCarlo that he had recently returned from a disturbing visit to Belgrade. He found the Serbians totally unwilling to budge on Kosovo and looking to Russia as their political and economic partner. When Rupel protested to Serbian officials that, "you can't leave Europe and your European business relationships behind and just deal with Russia," the response he got was, "just watch us." Rupel asserted that Russia was a growing problem on a number of fronts and was complicating resolution of regional problems. He worried about developments in Bosnia, and urged the U.S. to put pressure on Greece to find new approaches to deal with the Macedonian name issue. On Kosovo, Rupel underscored that the authorities there need to do a better job making Serbian inhabitants feel at home. He noted for example that Serb villages need to feel safe without the protection of foreign troops. DAS DiCarlo discussed the Troika's latest efforts to foster agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, Russia's unhelpful role, discussions with the UN on the legal basis for Kosovo independence, and a possible timeline for the international community to handle the Kosovo issue after December 10. She cautioned that the chances of a breakthrough in the Troika deliberations are slim. Rupel agreed, saying that Ischinger had told him there was only a ten percent chance of finding a compromise. DiCarlo stressed that we need close U.S.-EU cooperation in managing the Kosovo issue and that we have to be ready to make decisions and move forward in a timely manner.

MFA Senior Officials: Slovenia To Focus on Balkans During Its EU Presidency

13. (C) State Secretary Matjaz Sinkovec, who chaired a November 5 meeting of senior directors with DAS DiCarlo, reviewed the range of Balkan issues facing Slovenia and the EU. He urged the U.S. to look at the whole region together and to do as much as we could, terming it a "season for carrots." Sinkovec advocated for tackling the Western Balkans with a comprehensive strategy. He made two major points: the EU should keep a symmetric approach - the values of the whole region should be the same as euro-atlantic values; and 2) the EU should remain flexible as it approached each case. He noted that "the security of Europe depends on security in the Balkans." Sinkovec and others stressed that Slovenia would like to offer the countries of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania the same chances to join the trans-atlantic institutions as eastern European countries. He stated that Slovenia would seek EU consensus and unity. DAS DiCarlo assured him that our position on the Balkans was the same as Slovenia's. She noted that U.S. policy is to get the region moving on the trans-atlantic path. Sinkovec asked to repeat these consultations in the future.

Slovenes Eager for U.S.-EU Coordination on Kosovo

14. (C) Roman Kirn, Director of the Americas Division, explained that Slovenia has been focusing more and more on the Kosovo problem, but it was only part of the overall picture. Sinkovec stated that Slovenia was cautious about real prospects from the Troika process. He said that the U.S. and the EU should continue to urge Pristina to show patience and restraint. He also suggested that Pristina coordinate moves with the U.S. and EU to minimize negative effects. Sinkovec acknowledged the need to encourage Serbia to make progress on ICTY, but said that the EU should then

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offer Serbia the chance to sign an SAA. He added that this should be done before Kosovo status issues are in their final stages.

15. (C) Leon Marc, the Director for Southeastern Europe, detailed the Foreign Minister's recent visit to Serbia, Pristina and Macedonia. Marc contrasted Macedonia, which seemed "desperate" to get into the EU and NATO, with the attitude in Belgrade. According to Marc, in Serbia, President Tadic and FM Jeremic had stressed that a European future for Serbia (and Tadic's own political future) depended on Kosovo, and partially on an early signing of an SAA. The FM had found Kostunica a "bit softer" but still very critical of the fourteen points and unwilling to accept a factual, not formal independence; Marc said that Tadic and Jeremic might be willing to accept such a factual independence. In Pristina, the FM heard concerns from moderate Serbs about a continuation of an international presence in Kosovo and locally. Those moderates were anxious that local clans/mafia could consolidate control over local government. DAS DiCarlo shared our concern about growing radicalization in Serbia and in Bosnia. Bogdan Benko, the Director General for European Affairs and Bilateral Affairs, stressed the need to provide strong support to OHR Laycak.

16. (C) Kirn stated that the main problem was not just the lack of EU unity, but also Russia. He stressed that it would be important for the Secretary General to provide the UN's legal views to enable the EU to move, given the "solid threat by Russia." DAS DiCarlo explained that we believed we had to be prepared to move forward without a new UNSCR. She reviewed our lawyers' opinion that UNSCR 1244 does not preclude Kosovo declaring independence and third country recognition. UNSCR 1244 would remain in effect and provide the basis for an international presence - both civilian and military; it would still provide a mandate for KFOR. She walked through some scenarios for timing - the need for

discussion in New York after December 10, but warning that waiting much past January could bring greater instability. She noted that she expected the British and French would be eager to share their views with the Slovenes.

Slovenia Wants EU to Keep Focused on Enlargement

¶ 17. (C) A constant theme in the day's meetings with DAS DiCarlo was Slovenia's strong desire to see real progress on enlargement in both the EU and NATO. Benko said that Slovenia was trying to convince its EU partners that enlargement covers the Western Balkans and Turkey. He worried that it was difficult to speak about enlargement given the "enlargement fatigue." He noted, however, that French policy had changed and that France was now more willing to discuss the Western Balkans, especially Kosovo. (He added that Slovenia consulted with France frequently to coordinate activities since France will assume the EU Presidency after Slovenia.) Kirn stressed the need for a comprehensive strategy for the Balkans. He questioned how to make it "visible and viable" to Europe. He laid out Slovenia's desiderata/analysis: Croatia was doing well and should have no problem entering NATO and the EU; Serbia should sign an SAA as soon as possible; the EU should encourage Bosnia Herzegovina also to sign an SAA; and the EU should move Macedonia to the status of a candidate country. He admitted that no one is totally prepared, but that this was still the best course. Matej Marn, Deputy Political Director and Director for EU Affairs, added that these were the political achievements Slovenia hoped for during its EU Presidency. Several interlocutors also hit on the theme of making progress on the visa facilitation program.

Slovenia Hopes for 3 New NATO Members

¶ 18. (C) State Secretary Sinkovec said all three aspirant countries should be invited to join NATO at the next NATO Summit. Darja Golez, from the Security Policy Division, stressed three points important to Slovenia: 1) enlargement for the three MEP countries; 2) the urgent need to adapt a comprehensive strategy for the Western Balkans; and 3) keeping the NATO door open. DAS DiCarlo stated our complete agreement about the aspirant countries entering NATO. While noting that Macedonia and Albania still need to make more progress, it was doable with the right political will by April. We too wanted to see the three aspirants in NATO as soon as possible. She told the Slovenes that we would be asking for their assistance in managing the name issue of Macedonia and cautioned that Greece could block Macedonia's

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entry if there was not progress.

Future Consultations

¶ 19. (C) The Slovene officials were very appreciative of DAS DiCarlo's insights and stressed the importance of ongoing contacts and coordination as Slovenia prepares to take up the EU Presidency. Kirn suggested consulting again during the November 15 U.S.-EU Task Force video conference and on the margins of the December 6 NATO meeting.

¶ 10. DAS DiCarlo has cleared this cable.
COLEMAN